

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9812

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6053

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF, SY

SUBJ: KHADDAM VISIT TO MOSCOW

1. SUMMARY. IN THEIR RECENT CONSULTATIONS WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, THE SOVIETS WERE ABLE TO BRING SYRIA INTO LINE WITH THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN COMMUNIQUE'S RECOGNITION OF THE GENEVA MEPC AS THE ONLY FRAMEWORK FOR FURTHER "PARTIAL MEASURES" TOWARD A ME SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, OUTWARD SIGNS DO NOT INDICATE THAT THE SOVIET-SYRIAN TALKS PRODUCED ANY IMPORTANT REFINEMENT ON THE QUESTIONS OF THE TIMING FOR THE MEPC'S RESUMPTION OR

THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION. JUDGING, BY  
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THE SOVIET-SYRIAN JOINT COMMUNIQUE (PRAVDA, APRIL 27),

THE SYRIANS DID NOT MOVE BEYOND PREVIOUSLY AGREED POSITIONS IN FORMULATING AN ACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR A ME SETTLEMENT DESPITE GROMYKO'S EXPLICIT ASSURANCES ABOUT THE GOLAN AND THE SOVIETS' VISIBLE WILLINGNESS--VIA THEIR CHIEF OF STAFF VISIT TO DAMASCUS--TO STRESS THEIR COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING SYRIA'S DEFENSE CAPABILITY. WE SUSPECT THAT THE REFERENCES TO THE 1967 OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND TO SECURITY FOR "ALL STATES" IN THE ME IN THE OFFICIAL SOVIET ANNOUNCEMENT OF BREZHNEV-KHADDAM MEETING (PRAVDA, APRIL 27) REFLECT A SOVIET EFFORT TO SUGGEST MORE PROGRESS THAN WAS ACTUALLY ACHIEVED IN BRINGING THE SYRIANS AROUND TO POSITIONS CONSISTENT WITH THOSE STRESSED BY GROMYKO. END SUMMARY.

2. MAJOR INNOVATION IN THE SOVIET-SYRIAN COMMUNIQUE (PRAVDA, APRIL 27) IS A JOINT STATEMENT THAT THE GENEVA MEPC FRAMEWORK MUST BE EMPLOYED FOR WORKING OUT ANY FURTHER "PARTIAL MEASURES" TOWARD A ME SETTLEMENT. SYRIAN ENDORSEMENT OF THIS FORMULA BRINGS DAMASCUS INTO LINE WITH THE POSITION SET FORTH IN THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN COMMUNIQUE AFTER FALNAY'S VISIT. THE COMMUNIQUE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT REFINE THE PARTIES' VIEWS ON THE TIMING FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. IT REITERATES ONLY THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE CONVENED "AT THE EARLIEST DATE." THE SYRIANS AND SOVIETS THUS DROPPED THE IDEA--ACCEPTED BY BOTH PARTIES DURING GROMYKO'S DAMASCUS VISIT IN FEBRUARY--OF PUBLICLY SETTING A DEADLINE FOR THE MEPC'S RESUMPTION.

3. THE COMMUNIQUE CONTAINS NO SURPRISES IN THE JOINTLY AGREED FORMULAS ON THE BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT. ON A TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT THE PARTIES RESUSCITATE A SPECIFIC REFERENCE FOR THE NEED TO IMPLEMENT UN RESOLU-

TIONS ON THE ME (THE SOVIETS AND SYRIANS LAST REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE UN RESOLUTIONS AFTER ASAD'S VISIT TO MOSCOW IN SEPTEMBER 1974), BUT DOES NOT DEFINE "OCCUPIED TERRITORIES" IN TERMS OF 1967 FRONTIERS. BY CONTRAST THE SOVIET OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT BREZHNEV'S

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RECEPTION OF KHADDAM (PRAVDA, APRIL 27)--PUBLISHED IN A COMMUNIQUE-LIKE FORMAT--PROMINENTLY FEATURES A REFERENCE TO THE FULL LIBERATION OF LANDS OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL "IN 1967." THESE REFERENCES TO UN RESOLUTIONS AND 1967 FRONTIERS, ALONG WITH THE OFFICIAL CALL FOR TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, APPEAR TO REFLECT A MAXIMUM SOVIET EFFORT TO OBTAIN EXPLICIT SYRIAN ENDORSEMENT OF A TERRITORIAL

SETTLEMENT CONSISTENT WITH MOSCOW'S PUBLICLY STATED FORMULAS A LA GROMYKO' SPEECH APRIL 23. JUDGED BY THE SYRIAN-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE, HOWEVER, THE SYRIANS PROVED UNWILLING TO MOVE BEYOND THEIR ESTABLISHED POSITION. ON OTHER ASPECTS OF A SETTLEMENT THE SOVIETS WERE UNABLE TO OBTAIN ANY OVERT ENDORSEMENT OF GUARANTEES OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY, ALTHOUGH IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF KHADDAM'S MEETING WITH BREZHNEV THEY AGAIN SOUGHT TO IMPLY A DEGREE OF ACCORD ON THIS ISSUE BY REFERRING TO A JUST AND STABLE PEACE FOR "ALL STATES AND PEOPLES" OF THE ME.

4. ON THE ALL-IMPORTANT PALESTINIAN QUESTION, THE PUBLIC DOCUMENTS DO NOT SUGGEST ANY MAJOR REFINEMENT IN PREVIOUSLY HELD SOVIET-SYRIAN POSITIONS. THE PARTIES AGREE THAT THE PLO MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE GENEVE CONFERENCE "ON AN EQUAL FOOTING WITH OTHER PARTIES." THIS COINCIDES WITH AN IDENTICAL STATEMENT IN THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN COMMUNIQUE. HOWEVER, THE JOINTLY AFFIRMED POSITION THAT THE MEPC MUST BE RECONVENED AT THE EARLIEST DATE "WITH PARTICIPATION" (PRI UCHASTII) OF THE PLO APPEARS TO LEAVE THE TIMING OF PLO ATTENDANCE AMBIGUOUS. THIS FORMULA DOES APPEAR TO COME CLOSER TO THE DEMAND THAT THE PLO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE FROM THE BEGINNING THAN DID THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN COMMUNIQUE, WHICH MADE NO DIRECT OR IMPLIED REFERENCE TO TIMING.

5. COMMENT. WE THINK THE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY LESS THAN WHOLLY PLEASED AT THE RESULTS OF GROMYKO'S TALKS WITH KHADDAM, ALTHOUGH THEY COULD HARDLY HAVE EXPECTED TO BRING DAMASCUS VERY FAR TOWARD THE POSITION GROMYKO OUTLINE IN HIS TOAST. THEY, OF COURSE WILL  
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VIEW POSITIVELY SYRIAN'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE LATEST FORMULAS ABOUT GENEVA AND SYRIAN REENDORSEMENT OF SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT PROCESS. BUT IT IS LIKELY THAT MOSCOW--WITH GENERAL KUIKOV IN DAMASCUS--HOPED THE SYRIANS WOULD BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN PUBLIC. ONE POSSIBLE INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS FEEL THESE TALKS PRODUCED LESS THAN THE DESIRED RESULTS IS THE STATEMENT BY PRAVDA COMMENTATOR YU. TSAPLIN (APRIL 28) WHICH POINTEDLY STRESSES THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IS LINKED TO COORDINATION OF EFFORTS BY THE ARAB STATES AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES BASED ON THE "UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR HIGH RESPONSIBILITY AND DEMONSTRATION OF GOOD WILL." SUCH A POINTED REFERENCE TO ARAB "RESPONSIBILITIES"--A VERY RARE PHENOMENON IN THE SOVIET MEDIA

--IN A COMMENTRAY ON THE RECENT EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN  
VISITS SUGGESTS, IN OUR VIEW, THAT MOSCOW PROBABLY  
FOUND SOME DEFICIENCIES IN THESE QUALITIES DURING  
THEIR TALKS WITH KHADDAM AND FAHMY.  
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